



COMUNICAR LA ARQUITECTURA

DEL ORIGEN DE LA MODERNIDAD A LA ERA DIGITAL

eug

The background of the cover is an abstract composition of broad, expressive brushstrokes in various shades of teal and dark blue. A prominent, dark, textured square, resembling a piece of fabric or a different material, is positioned in the center-right area, overlapping the brushstrokes.

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TOMO I

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a la era digital

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del origen de la modernidad a la era digital

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Grand Hotel Architecture as Depicted, Photographed, and Filmed in the Case of the CIGA: Compagnia Italiana dei Grandi Alberghi

La arquitectura del Gran Hotel representada, fotografiada y filmada en el caso del CIGA: Compagnia Italiana dei Grandi Alberghi

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Abstract

La primera cadena hotelera de lujo de Italia se fundó en Venecia en 1906 con el nombre de Compagnia Italiana dei Grandi Alberghi (Compañía Italiana de Grandes Hoteles) (CIGA). La empresa reunió una serie de prestigiosos hoteles venecianos preexistentes ubicados en edificios históricos, incluido el famoso Hotel Danieli; Posteriormente, la empresa adquirió otros grandes hoteles en las principales ciudades italianas. La CIGA confió a los mejores tipógrafos la impresión de anuncios muy refinados para etiquetas de equipaje, postales y folletos. Colaboraron muchos artistas napolitanos, lo que quizás fue sugerido por el entonces director general de Nápoles. La valiosa arquitectura del hotel CIGA está documentada no sólo por pintores e ilustradores, sino también por fotógrafos y directores de cine que rodaron sus películas en los hoteles CIGA después de la quiebra en 1995. Aunque los antiguos hoteles CIGA han sido adquiridos por otras empresas, el esplendor del valor y la calidad arquitectónicos creados por la CIGA permanece hasta la fecha.

The first luxury hotel chain in Italy was established in Venice in 1906 under the name Compagnia Italiana dei Grandi Alberghi (tr. Italian Grand Hotels Company) (CIGA). The company collected a series of pre-existing prestigious Venetian hotels located in historic buildings including the famous Hotel Danieli; later, the company acquired other grand hotels in major Italian cities. The CIGA entrusted the finest typographers to print highly refined advertisements for luggage labels, postcards, and brochures. Many Neapolitan artists collaborated, which was perhaps suggested by the then-managing director from Naples. The extremely valuable CIGA hotel architecture is documented not only by painters and illustrators but also by photographers and film directors who shot their movies in the CIGA hotels after the bankruptcy in 1995. Even though the erstwhile CIGA hotels have been acquired by other companies, the splendor of the architectural value and quality created by the CIGA remains till date.

Keywords

CIGA, hoteles, postales, fotografías, ubicación de la película

CIGA, hotels, postcards, photographs, film location

Introduction

In 1906, the first Italian luxury hotel chain Compagnia Italiana dei Grandi Alberghi (Italian Grand Hotels Company) (CIGA) was born in Venice and acquired the following Venetian grand hotels: Danieli, Grand Hotel, Rome et Suisse, Vittoria, Beau Rivage, and other properties in central locations¹. The first CIGA-affiliated hotels comprised a collection of Venetian hotels that had already gained a good reputation in Venice over many years. Hotel Danieli is still recognized as the most iconic historic hotel in Venice. It was established by Giuseppe Dal Niel in 1822 in the 14th-century noble residence Palazzo Dandolo and was known as Danieli². By the 1900s, the Grand Hotel became one of the most popular hotels in Venice. It occupied two contiguous historical palaces Ferro and Fini facing the Grand Canal and was transformed into a hotel in the 1870s. The hotel, originally called Rome et Suisse, also faces the Grand Canal. Later, in 1978, CIGA renamed Regina, Bristol & Britannia, Europa & Britannia, as Europa & Regina.³ The Vittoria (formerly the Regina d’Inghilterra) is now an office building. The Beau Rivage was later joined to the adjoining d’Angleterre and became the current five-star hotel Londra Palace.

Since then, CIGA has collected hotels representing Venice’s Lido and the best hotels in major Italian cities, including the Grande Albergo delle Rose in Rhodes, which was an Italian colony. The CIGA, Italy’s most sophisticated hotel chain, achieved unmatched quality in terms of advertising prints in their postcards, language labels, brochures, and so on, depicting their hotels in high-quality illustrations or photos. All CIGA Hotel buildings, whether they are historical buildings or new constructions, have high cultural and historical property value, and it is no exaggeration to say that the advertisements that represent them as icons are works of art. After World War II, these CIGA hotels have also served as filming locations for many famous movies.

Illustrations

Richter & Co., a Neapolitan printing company, has contributed to providing high-quality illustrations for brochures, luggage labels, and postcards for the CIGA hotels. This Swiss company, originally founded in Naples in 1842, acquired clients from the finest hotels in all European cities and some colonies in 1900–1930s⁴. The Richter employed its finest Italian artists to produce postcards depicting the hotel’s exterior view illustrated in watercolor. All CIGA-affiliated hotels were illustrated by these beautiful postcards made by the Richter. Presumably, it became more favorable after Alfredo Campione (1868–1955) became the

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¹ CIGA, 50° esercizio sociale. *Bilancio del 1955 e relazioni del Consiglio Amministrazione e del Collegio Sindacale presentate all’Assemblea dei Soci del 26 Aprile 1956* (Venice: S. Lazzaro, 1956), 37.

² Giuseppe Tassini, *Alcuni palazzi ed antichi edifici di Venezia* (Venice: M. Fontana, 1879), 143–145.

³ Ewa Kawamura, “Strategia artistica nelle stampe pubblicitarie degli alberghi della Compagnia Italiana dei Grandi Alberghi (CIGA) negli anni 1906–1938”, in *La Città e il turismo. Hotel tra Ottocento e Novecento*, ed. by Gemma Belli and Alessandro Castagnaro (Naples: arte’m, 2019), 75.

⁴ Ewa Kawamura, “L’iconografia nella produzione a stampa della Richter & C. per il settore turistico tra il 1900 e il 1930”, *Eikonocity* 1, n.º 1 (2016): 148.

CIGA's managing director in 1918. He and his brother Pietro Campione had lived in Naples for many years and managed two important Neapolitan hotels: Hôtel de Londres and Hotel Santa Lucia. Both hotels had their high-quality illustrated advertisements printed by the Richter.



Figure 1. Postcard depicting the view of the Grand Hotel Royal Danieli in Venice, printed in offset by Richter & Co., around 1910. Source: Private collection.

When Alfredo Campione became the managing director of the CIGA ten years after the opening of the symbolic Grand Hotel Excelsior Palace in 1908 in Lido Venice, the CIGA's golden age had already started; in 1906, the CIGA was already entrusted by the municipality of Venice with the arrangement of the main seaside road in Lido⁵. In addition to the Excelsior Palace, three other hotels in Venice Lido were acquired by the CIGA: the pre-existing Grand Hotel des Bains, the Grand Hotel Lido, and the Villa Regina —the best hotels in Lido—. Naturally, the Richter created beautiful luggage labels and postcards depicting their hotels with refined illustrations for all these CIGA-owned properties in Venice Lido and Venice in the 1910s and 1920s (fig. 1).

At that time, Pesaro-born skilled painter Mario Borgoni (1869-1931), who resided in Naples, was the director of chromolithography of the Richter⁶; he designed fine artistic posters and luggage labels of Hotel Excelsior Palace, printed by Richter around 1910.

⁵ Paolo Gerbaldo, *Compagnia Italiana dei Grandi Alberghi. Un sogno italiano dalla Belle époque al Miracolo economico* (CIGA, 1906-1979) (Turin: G. Giappichelli Editore, 2015), 18-19.

⁶ Ernesto Giannelli, *Artisti napoletani viventi: pittori, scultori ed architetti* (Naples: Tipografia Melfi & Joele, 1916), 42.

Each CIGA-owned hotel has at least one version of Richter's offset color print postcard depicting the view of the building in watercolor, sometimes made in two or three versions. For example, the postcard of the Venetian Hotel Vittoria has a day view version and a sunset one. The Venetian Hotel Beau Rivage has two watercolor postcard versions of its exterior view, a morning scene and an evening one, which were signed “EB,” presumably Neapolitan illustrator Ernesto Bocchino⁷, one of the Richter's recurrent artists. The Venetian Grand Hotel has two different moonlit night view postcards made by another anonymous artist of the Richter. The contemporaneous Neapolitan painter Francesco Tessitore (1845-c. 1915) worked in Richter's engraving department⁸; however, his signature never appears on the Richter's postcards. The Richter printed at least three types of finely refined and illustrated postcards without the painter's signature for Venice Lido's Excelsior Palace. The first one was the similar façade view depicted for the inauguration pamphlet printed by the Richter. It was the never-realized seaside façade that falsely added one floor and a large part of the beach cut off for bridge access. The other two postcards were a pair of pendant paintings of the real building exterior, one depicting a day view from the beach, and the other depicting a night view from the garden with an airship in the sky. The Richter's postcards of the Grand Hotel Lido documented two different building facades: one is a not realized extended façade decorated with a series of classical statues on the top, and the other is a real smaller façade. While Hotel Villa Regina in Venice Lido had two similar illustration postcards, the fashion of passers-by changed from the belle époque style around 1910 to the art-deco style in the 1920s.

Many postcards for the CIGA properties in Venice Lido are illustrated by well-known painters. The aforementioned Villa Regina has also a watercolor scenic postcard signed by Gian Luciano Sormani (1867-1938) and printed by the Milan typographer A. Scrocchi (fig. 2). Sormani was a painter born in Legnago (Verona), who was educated and primarily active in Venice but taught in Naples. Presumably, the CIGA's managing director Alfredo Campione, who came from Naples, favored his work. Sormani painted also other CIGA-owned hotels in Venice Lido: three exterior views of Hotel Excelsior Palace and a view of Hotel des Bains, and Scrocchi printed all of them as postcards around 1910. The Venetian hotel company CIGA favored the Naples-based illustrators in the 1910s and 1920s possibly because of the influence of the managing director Alfredo Campione who lived in Naples for a long time.

⁷ Kawamura, “L'iconografia...”, 156.

⁸ Giannelli, *Artisti napoletani...*, 458.



Figure 2. Postcard depicting Hotel Villa Regina in Venice Lido painted by Gian Luciano Sorman, printed in offset by A. Scrocchi, around 1910–20. Source: Private collection.



Figure 3. Postcard depicting a cheerful beach scene of Hotel Excelsior Palace in Venice Lido painted by Fortunato Matania, printed in offset by Arti Grafiche Alfieri & Lacroix, around 1925. Source: Private collection.



Figure 4. Postcard depicting an elegant hall scene of Hotel Excelsior in Naples painted by Fortunato Matania, printed in offset by Arti Grafiche Alfieri & Lacroix, around 1925. Source: Private collection.

Upon his request, around 1925, Fortunato Matania (1881-1963), one of the finest Neapolitan painters, produced a series of society sceneries of the Excelsior Palace Hotel in watercolor, to use for pamphlets and postcards. There are a pair of beach view pendants: one depicts the guests relaxing on the day beach (fig. 3), and the other is a dancing scene on the night beach. Matania painted one other view depicting the hotel restaurant on the beach for postcards. Most guests painted by Matania for this hotel in Venice Lido appear English-like people, and the fact that Matania had been active in Great Britain for most of the time up to that point clearly shows the influence. Furthermore, Matania painted a vertical format series in watercolor, depicting how the guests spent time in the halls or the restaurants of the CIGA hotels: Danieli, Grand Hotel in Venice, Grand Hotel in Rome (now St. Regis Rome), Excelsior in Rome (now The Westin Excelsior Rome), and Excelsior in Naples; the latter three pre-existing hotels became the property of CIGA hotels since 1923⁹, and these paintings were reproduced on the postcards printed by the Milanese typography Arti Grafiche Alfieri & Lacroix (fig. 4)¹⁰. On the opening of the Grand Hotel Colombia in Genoa in 1929, Matania painted two of its hotel interior scenes: a Chinese boudoir and a dining room furnished with the Venetian Rococo chair. The latter painting is reproduced in the illustrated guidebook to Italy, edited by the CIGA¹¹.

⁹ CIGA, *50° esercizio...*, 42.

¹⁰ Kawamura, “L'iconografia...”, 157.

¹¹ Compagnia Italiana dei Grandi Alberghi, *Italia* (Bergamo: Istituto Italiano d'arti grafiche, 1929), 87.



Figure 5. Postcard depicting the view of the Grand Hotel in Rome painted by Salvatore Petruolo, printed in offset by Istituto Italiano di Arti Grafiche, around 1930. Source: Private collection.

This book contains several watercolor illustrations of CIGA-owned hotels. Most of them were painted by Salvatore Petruolo (1857-1942) a Catanzaro-born painter, active in Naples. He prepared the exterior view of the Excelsior Palace on the Venice Lido, the Grand Hotel in Rome (fig.5), the Excelsior in Rome, another homonymous hotel in Naples, and the Grand Hotel et des Iles Borromées in Stresa, which became CIGA-affiliated in 1923. These works were probably commissioned by Alfredo Campione because his wife Beatrice had received an anonymous landscape painting in watercolor by Petruolo for her signature collection book¹².

Two other different painters participated to illustrate other Venetian hotels. A watercolor painting depicting the daytime view of the Grand Hotel in Venice was painted by Alessandro Brugnoli (sic)¹³, which had a similar style to several nighttime views of the same hotel made for postcards printed by Richter (fig.6). However, the book might have erroneously indicated the name Alessandro, instead of Emmanuele Brugnoli (1859-1944), a Bologna-born painter,

¹² Many thanks to Messrs. Lucia and Gianfranco Campione, grandchildren of Alfredo and Beatrice Campione, for showing the book of signatures collected by Beatrice Campione.

¹³ Compagnia Italiana dei Grandi Alberghi, *Italia...*, 26.

who often produced Venetian views in the same style. For the Danieli, the book presented a view painted by the Venetian Ferruccio Scattola (1873-1950)¹⁴, who composed a nocturnal scenery against the background of the buildings between the Palazzo Ducale and the Danieli with two elegantly dressed women on the gondola and a man playing the mandolin on another gondola. All these hotel illustrations were also reproduced in the advertising postcards printed by the same typographer of the book: Istituto Italiano di arti grafiche founded in 1873 in Bergamo.



Figure 6. Postcard depicting the nocturnal view of the Grand Hotel in Venice, watercolor of an anonymous painter, printed in offset by Richter & Co., around 1920. Source: Private collection.

Photographs

The aforementioned CIGA's guidebook to Italy titled “Italia” includes color illustrations of the hotels alongside black and white photos, which were taken by the famous photographic studio Alinari brothers —Romualdo (1830-1890), Leopoldo (1832-1865), and Giuseppe Alinari (1836- 1890)— which was founded in Florence in 1852. They documented the Danieli, the Grand Hotel in Venice (fig.7), and the Excelsior Palace in Venice Lido including its fine interior spaces.

Prior to the foundation of the CIGA, the pre-existent important hotels were already photographed by famous 19th-century Italian photographers. For example, the famous Venetian photographer Carlo Naya (1816-1882) photographed the Danieli, while Florentine photographer Giacomo Brogi (1822-1881) produced stereoscopic photo cards as touristic commercial products depicting several future CIGA-managed hotels: the Grand Hotel des Iles Borromées in Stresa, and two Florentine important properties that were included in 1960s under the CIGA: Grand Hotel and Hotel de la Ville (later Excelsior).

¹⁴ Compagnia Italiana dei Grandi Alberghi, *Italia...*, 27.



Figure 7. Postcard of the Grand Hotel with adjoining Desdemona's house in Venice, photographed by Alinari, printed by an anonymous printing house, around 1910. Source: Private collection.

The CIGA's guidebook *Italia* presents several photos of hotels in Venice Lido captured by Venetian photographer Giovanni Scarabello. After the publication, the CIGA commissioned another Venetian photographer Pietro Giacomelli (1892-1939). He was the son of the photographer Giacomo Giacomelli (1860-1907) who had moved to Venice in 1887 from Trieste, to collaborate with the Venetian photographer Giovanni Contarini, who had opened a photography studio in 1860 in Venice.¹⁵ Pietro Giacomelli had taken pictures of every CIGA hotel in Venice and Venice Lido, especially those of Hotel Excelsior Palace, constantly from 1926 until 1938. He photographically documented the interiors of Hotel des Bains (1929, 1934, 1938), the Danieli (1930s), the Excelsior in Rome (1935), and the Britannia in Venice (1938) that became a newly listed CIGA hotel in 1936. The other hotels, such as the Vittoria in Venice (1929), the Colombia in Genova (1934), Excelsior in Naples (1935), and the Grand Hotel in Rome (1939) only had their exterior photographed. Furthermore, Pietro Giacomelli photographed the façade of Hotel Principe di Savoia in 1937 before it was incorporated into the CIGA in the following year, probably at the latter's request.

After the Second World War, the CIGA hotel pictures were taken by local photographers. For example, for Hotel Excelsior in Naples, Neapolitan photographer Riccardo Carbone (1897-1973) would create portraits of its celebrity guests in the foreground of the hotel entrance such as Anna Magnani and Roberto Rossellini (1947), Paulette Goddard (1948), Beniamino Gigli (1952), Japanese prince Akihito and Benjamin Sumner Welles (1953), Lea Padovani, Märta Torén, and Adriano Olivetti (1955), Aga Khan, Gina Lollobrigida, Milko Skofic, and Kim Novak (1957), Marina Vlady and Robert Hossein (1959), Alfred Hitchcock (1960),

¹⁵ Daniele Resini, *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*. Volume 54 (2000), s.v. "GIACOMELLI, Pietro", accessed August 24, 2023, https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pietro-giacomelli_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/.

Renata Tebaldi (1967), and so on. The Danieli was photographed by a Venetian photographer Graziano Arici (1949) who also photographed the CIGA hotels in Venice and archived their celebrity guests pictures such as Walt Disney (1951), Le Corbusier (1965), Paul Newman (1971), John Huston (1972), Vincente Minnelli (1976), Liza Minnelli (1976), and so on.

In 1973, a bimonthly magazine for hotel guests was started, later called “CIGA Hotels Magazine,” which was illustrated with photos of its guests and hotels.

As Film Locations

Some iconic films were set in CIGA hotels. The Danieli is one of the most sought-after hotels for film shoots.

One of the earliest examples was a French-Italian drama film set in Venice, *La Gondola delle Chimere* (The Phantom Gondola) (1936) and directed by Augusto Genina. This film has a scene starring French Actress Marcelle Chantal, who sits elegantly in the main hall lounge of the Danieli¹⁶. Italian historical drama film *Il Viaggio* (The Voyage; The Journey) (1974) based on the homonymous novel by Luigi Pirandello published in 1910 was set in various Italian grand hotels in the belle époque period such as Grand Hotel Villa Politi in Syracuse, Grand Hotel Villa Igea and Grand Hotel et des Palmes in Palermo (also once under the CIGA), Grand Hotel et de Milan in Milan, and the Danieli in Venice. It was the final film of the great Italian director Vittorio De Sica. The last scene is set in the Danieli, in which the great Neapolitan actress Sophia Loren sojourns in the Doge suite. After checking into the hotel, when she slowly climbs upstairs accompanied by the receptionist, the film closely showcases the iconic staircase of the Danieli. The Danieli's suite room also appeared in the James Bond film *Moonraker* (1979) starring Roger Moore. In the film, he stays there with an attractive lady. The American romantic comedy *Only You* (1994) is set in two of the most attractive luxury hotels of the time in Italy: Le Sireneuse in Positano and the Danieli. Marisa May plays the heroine who is looking, with her American girlfriend, for her ideal but unknown fiancé who had stayed in the Danieli. Prior to their arrival at the Danieli, the gondolier expressly accentuates their prestigious destination: “Signore, ecco il Danieli! (Ladies, here we are the Danieli!)” The receptionist gives them their room key, which has a fringe key ring, kept in the specialized chest of drawers. Every contemporaneous CIGA hotel had this type of designed key, now out of use. The Italian comedy film *Viaggi di Nozze* (Honeymooners) (1995) directed by Carlo Verdone was also set in a suite room at the Danieli. These two movies document the last year of the CIGA's hotel-management era because, in 1995, the CIGA was sold to the American company ITT Sheraton. The American suspense film *The Tourist* (2010) starring Angelina Jolie and Johnny Depp was not set in the real building of the Danieli. The façade with boat access directly from the Grand Canal and their gorgeous suite room were set in another Venetian historical building similar to the Danieli. That was the Palazzo Pisani Moretta, and a fake “Danieli” sign was put on its entrance. The film showcased the real Danieli in the scenes showing the entrance room with the reception counter and the protagonists ascending the monumental staircase.

¹⁶ Mario Gerosa, “Avventura al Grand Hotel”, *CIGA Hotels Magazine*, n.º 85 (November 1989): 68-69.

Another prestigious Venetian historical hotel, the CIGA-managed Gritti Palace, is also a popular film location. Established in the 16th century, Palazzo Gritti originally depended on the adjoining Grand Hotel settled in the Ferro and Fini Palaces but, in 1948, became an independent hotel. The Grand Hotel was later transformed into the headquarters of the Veneto regional council as it is today. The James Bond film, *From Russia with Love* (1963) documented the Gritti Palace Hotel and the Grand Hotel, which still functioned as a hotel, with the terrace restaurant on the first floor and each window tent of the guest room. The Italian film *Identificazione di Una Donna* (Identification of a Woman) (1982), directed by Michelangelo Antonioni, was set in the Gritti Palace. This hotel became famous for the sojourn of Ernest Hemingway in 1947. Woody Allen's comedy film *Everyone Says I Love You* (1996) is set in Room No. 116, also called "Suite Hemingway". The suspense film *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1999) was set in the hotel Europa & Regina, which was, at that time, one of the CIGA hotels but since 2000, was rebranded as one of the Westin hotels under Marriott International and renewed, in 2019, under the St. Regis brand. The film stars Jude Law and Matt Damon, who hires a suite room of the Europa & Regina facing the Grand Canal. After the Second World War, the golden age of the CIGA hotels has been documented by several famous movies produced between the 1970s and 1990s. Some of these films documented the classic "four horses" logo and the dark green CIGA hotel porter uniforms.

The legendary film *Death in Venice* (1971) was set in the Grand Hotel des Bains in Venice Lido, directed by Luchino Visconti. It is based on the homonymous novel *Der Tod in Venedig* by Thomas Mann. However, the original story is set in the Excelsior Palace—another hotel in Venice Lido under the CIGA—. Visconti chose the des Bains as the film location to capture the elegant belle époque atmosphere. A party scene from an American historical war movie *The English Patient* (1996) was filmed in the hall of Hotel des Bains, instead of the famous Sheppard's Hotel, which was described in the original homonymous novel that the movie was based on. The American historical gang film *Once Upon a Time in America* (1984) directed by Sergio Leone was set in the hall of the Excelsior Palace Hotel in Venice Lido for the protagonists' dinner date scene. After dinner, they spend some time romancing on the night beach against the background of the monumental hotel building in the neo-Moorish style, where the first edition of the Venice Film Festival was inaugurated on its terrace in 1932.

The Italian film *Viaggio in Italia* (Journey to Italy) (1954), directed by Roberto Rossellini, was set in Hotel Excelsior in Naples. Ingrid Bergman and George Sanders play the married protagonist couple. They stay in a suite room in the belle époque Neapolitan hotel Excelsior, and the film shows both the interior and exterior of this hotel building.

Federico Fellini's masterpiece *La Dolce Vita* (1960) was filmed in Hotel Excelsior in Rome, where the protagonist, played by Swedish actress Anita Ekberg, is staying. Moreover, this Roman Excelsior was also used as a set in the French suspense film *Plein Soleil* (Purple Noon) (1960), directed by René Clément. The rich young American male protagonist, played by Alain Delon, stays there as it is considered the best hotel in Rome. Furthermore, the Excelsior in Rome was also used as a set in the Italian comedy film *Grand Hotel Excelsior*

(1982) starring Adriano Celentano as the hotel director. Since 1998, Excelsior has been included in the Westin brand; thus, these movies have documented the atmosphere during the CIGA hotel-management era. In addition, the aforementioned film *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1999) was set in the Grand Hotel in Rome during the last year under the CIGA-management period, which was later overtaken by Starwood Hotels, and rebranded as St. Regis in 1999.

The number of hotels joined under the CIGA continued to increase throughout the 1970s and 1980s. In 1978, the Cristallo, a symbolical sky resort hotel in Cortina d'Ampezzo, became a CIGA hotel. Prior to the acquisition, the American comedy film *The Pink Panther* (1963) was shot in this hotel.

By the 1980s, most CIGA hotels coordinated the same Empire-style furnishings. Even today, traces of this furniture style can be seen in the Grand Hotel et des Palmes in Palermo, the Diana Majestic (since 1998, rebranded as the Sheraton) in Milan, and the two Excelsiors in Rome and Naples. Such furniture style is well-documented in Giuseppe Tornatore's Italian film *Nuovo Cinema Paradiso* (1988). The main character, Toto, a movie-loving Sicilian boy who has grown up to become a successful film director, stays in one of the luxury CIGA hotel suite rooms in Rome. The prevalence of the neoclassical taste of the CIGA around 1980 culminated in the renewed gorgeous furnishings for Hotel Principe di Savoia in Milan. The guest room interiors were coordinated with Louis XVI-style inlaid furniture manufactured by the firm Franco Monzio Compagnoni in Treviglio (Bergamo), which supplied many other CIGA hotels with their neoclassical style furniture. The furnishing of Hotel Principe di Savoia is well-documented in the American movie *Somewhere* (2010) directed by Sophia Coppola. After the hotel was acquired by the Dorchester Collection brand – a British luxury hotel company – in 2003, its interior style gradually changed.

Conclusion

In the second half of the 1980s, CIGA was controlled by Aga Khan who acquired other prestigious luxury hotels in Spain (the Palace in Madrid, the Maria Cristina in San Sebastian, the Alfonso XIII in Seville, etc.) and Austria (two Viennese hotels: the Imperial and the Bristol, and the Goldner Hirsch in Salzburg), and these hotels were also brought under the CIGA. However, due to the Gulf War and the economic recession, in 1992, Aga Khan lost ownership of the CIGA. In 1995, the CIGA was sold to ITT Sheraton, which had been part of the Starwood Hotels & Resorts group since 1998.

Till date, most of the former CIGA-affiliated hotels have maintained their prestigious status and continue to be counted among the best hotels, not only in Italy but also globally. The architectural and cultural heritage value of these buildings is immeasurable. Great visuals of the hotels are recognized and recorded in numerous high-quality advertisement prints designed by the finest painters, illustrators, and photographers and films shot by famous directors, all of them immortalizing the glorious history of the CIGA hotels.



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